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ABSTRACT

The study examined the inherences and differences in living conditions and female employment in villages; identified the correlations of the characteristics of female employment; and determined the possible and necessary degree of women manpower's involvement into work. Using the 1970 population census, data were obtained on the: age distribution of women, rate of economically active women in the women population, distribution of active women in the branches of national economy, qualifications and education, number of children, and supply of kindergarten and nursery. Settlements were clustered on the basis of: number of inhabitants, economic and functional types, and activity level of women. Correlation and multiple correlation analyses were used to clarify the ramifying interactions. Among the findings were: the highest rate of women activity level was found in the counties of Pest, Bacs-Kiskun, and Zala; the most important obstacles of involving women living in villages into employment besides agriculture were the very low educational level and specialization, the lack of suitable working opportunities in industry or in tertiary sectors, and the number of children, which was higher than in towns; and heavy industry did not ensure good opportunities for women employment, but attracted the industrial branches, where women might be employed. (NQ)

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Characteristic Features of Female Employment in the Rural Areas of Hungary

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Seminar 14: The Changing Roles of Women in Rural Societies

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Characteristic Features of Female Employment in the Rural ares of Hungary

A new research topic was launched in the Institute of Economic Planning concerning the problems of female employment in rural areas. This study attempts to serve as a basis for the long-term employment planning policy.

Our starting point was the following: the employment of men, those of working age, may be considered total in the country. Although the development of national economy is based on intensification, there is an additional need in manpower, which can only be ensured with the help of gradual envolvment of female manpower.

Taking into consideration the need for population growth, the tasks in bringing up children, and the supply of kindergarten and nursery, the employment of women living in towns is at or above the desirable level. The employment of vomen of working age was 78.6% in the Capital and 68.6% in other towns, while 52,9% in the villages in 1970. This is why a further hypothetical involvment can be done only from rural areas.

The main task of our research is to analyse the living conditions and circumstances of women in rural areas. We have to lay a special emphasis on revealing the possibilities and difficulties in mobilising the vomen manpower resources. We have to identify the areas in the country, where "free" female labourforce can be found and to analyse the causes of territorial differences, and the obstacles of redumption to work. The last step of the research is to decide on the desirable level and the way of utilization of female manpower at present and also in the future /till 1990/.

The study is to be done in two parts. The first part is based on village-level data of the 1970 census, and the purpose is to reveal the main inherences and great differences in living conditions, and female employment in villages. The second part is to

identify the correlations of the characteristics of female employment and to determine the possible and necessary degree of women manpower's envolvment into work and to work out the possible ways of its realisation.

This paper is to go into details of this first phase. Before this I feel necessary to outline some statistical categories, used below.

In statistical issues active earner is, who does earning activity and has salary, wage or other kind of incomes. So active earner is, who has labour relation or cooperative membership or who is independent. In this case the assisting family members of non-agricultural independents and those assisting family members in agriculture, who worked at least 90 days in 1969, also belong to this category. The use of this definition is difficult in case of women, working in agriculture, because household farming appears to be a special field of agricultural activity. Here, a problem arises from the fact, that one has to work on s p e c i a l fields of activity, that his activity could be considered as a working day /from which 90 days means to be active worker in statistical aspects/. Data show, that household farming has an important role in the food production of the country, as e.g. in 1975 more than a third of the total agricultural production originated from here. But we do not have reliable data concerning the number of workers and the actual number of working hours in household farming. It would be an important information as the labour activity of women in this field is significant. Household farming is relatively labour-intensive and results, however, in a certain level of income, yet - because of the above mentioned reasons - a large portion of women, working in household farming belongs to the "dependent" category in statistical issues. Beside the fact that the activity of the greatest percentage of the so called "dependent" women is of social benefit, they also save money for the family carrying out the tasks created by the family need or by the lack of service-supply in the villages.

Our research did not concentrate only on calculating the number of dependent women in villages, but first of all we tried to determine those factors, which resulted law or high women employment in different areas.

This means, that the decision about the desirable level of female activity in villages is not simply a quantitative problem. It is not proper to put the question forward in a way, whether female employment were desirable from the point of view of women, families, and society, but in such way, under what conditions and circumstances may the individuals, the families and society benefit from it? The given circumstances of the individual - age, family size, qualification and education the special conditions of the direct environment and the local community - largely determine the choice between undertaking a job or staying at home. That is why a concrete and profound analyses of these above mentioned factors is needed.

The premise of our investigation was that the activity of women living in rural areas is below the urban level. The difference is about 20%, though it shows a decreasing tendency. Examining the distribution of economically activ women among the branches of national economy, a difference between towns and rural areas can also be revealed. The rate of women, working in industry is 43% in towns, /disregarding the capital/ and 29% in villages. 44% of active women living in towns worked in tertiary sector, but this rate was only 26% in 1970, in case of women, living in villages. The rate of active women working in agriculture is much higher in rural areas than in towns. All these have common routes, which are as follows:

- the structure of possible working places in highly different in these two categories /towns and villages/,
- differences in qualification,
- differences in education,
- differences in service supply,
- there is also an additional, but not economic factor, which has to be taken into consideration. Namely the traditional image about the women's role in the family, which may play a more important

role, in the decision of undertaking a job or not, - in case of villages than in towns.

Differences become more important especially if we consider, that the data which shows the rate of active women living in villages and working in industry or in the tertiary sector is not realistic, because a significant part of these women work in towns.

The factors creating the difference between the activity of women in towns and in rural areas have complex, cumulative and remifying influence.

The qualification and the education is at a low level in the case of women living in rural areas, the job, which they might undertake is limited to semi-skilled and unskilled works. As these jobs are not well-paid, agrarian working possibilities have greater attraction, because of flexible working hours and additional income from household farming.

The level of service supply is lower and the number of children is higher than in towns, so women rather undertake jobs, which give the possibility to complete the tasks within the family. /These possibilities are much better in agriculture, than in industry - as regarding to flexible working hours./

Taking into consideration these above mentioned differences, in the first phase of our research we used the data of rural communes of the 1970 census as follows: age distribution of women, the rate of economically active women in the women population, the distribution of active women in the branches of national economy, qualification and education, number of children, the supply of kindergarten and nursery. We created clusters from the settlements on the basis of the number of inhabitants, the economic and functional types and the activity level of women. /The cluster features of villages examined in the scope of this study are presented in an enclosure./ To make clear the remifying interactions; correlation and multiple correlation analysis have been used.

Analysing the main factors influencing the a c t i v i t y r a t e, on the basis of these calculations, the following interactions have been clarified.

There is no direct interaction between women's activity and the settlement growth, as growth of population itself does not result in increase of women activity level. It has been revealed, that the economic activity is the highest in settlements above 5000 inhabitants and in settlements below 1000 inhabitants, - and the causes are partly similar. In the first case /the number of population is above 5000/ the high activity rate results from the diversification of settlement functions, but, in case of settlements with several farmsteads the cause is mainly the high rate of agrarian activity. In the second case /the number of population is below 1000/ the high activity level is derived also from the high agricultural employment share. This shows that the correlation is not between the settlement growth and activity level, but between the functional type of the settlement and the activity.

Together with the increase in a c t i v i t y l e v e l the rate of women with more than two children is decreasing till 60%, but above this it increases, as the employment above 60% exists in settlements with agrarian character, where the average number of children is higher. But on the same level of activity the number of children in family also differs, depending on settlement types. It is the highest in agrarian villages, and lowest in villages with industrial character. This shows the decreasing interest in bearing children with the increase of urbanisation.

The increase in a c t i v i t y l e v e l also implicates changes in the d i s t r i b u t i o n o f a c t i v e w o m e n i n t h e b r a n c h e s o f n a t i o n a l e c o n o m y. Until 40% in economic activity the increase in the rate of industrial earners is rapid, beyond this there is strong decrease, and above 70% of activity the rate of industrial employment is only 7%. The ratio of agrarian earners shows similar changes, in an opposite direction and the differences are also higher. The rate of employees

in the tertiary sector is gradually decreasing; on the lowest activity level it shows the highest number and in the case of 70% in activity level its rate is only 5%. This surprising phenomenon can be explained with the fact, that the highest activity level /above 70%/ exists mainly in underdeveloped, agrarian areas with settlements under 500 inhabitants, and in settlements with scattered farmsteads. /Naturally these settlements are with agrarian character and in general, industry and service industry are not located here./

There is a tight connection between the d i s t r i b u t i o n of a c t i v e w o m e n i n t h e b r a n c h e s o f n a t i o n a l e c o n o m y a n d e d u c a t i o n. Parallel with the growth in activity the level of graduated women is increasing until the rate of industrial workers is increasing, their peak value is at the same activity level, after which it is decreasing simultaneously with the decrease in the rate of industrial workers. Together with the growth of agrarian workers, the rate of elderly people /women above 55 years/ is rapidly increasing and it shows the ageing of agrarian workers.

Analysing the d i f f e r e n t t y p e s o f s e t t l e m e n t s the results are the following:

The e m p l o y m e n t r a t e of women is the lowest in settlements with mixed agrarian character and in fuctionless settlements. The settlements with touristic character show the highest rate of employment, but this rate is not significantly lower in settlements with industrial or central feature.

The educational level is the lowest in the case of agrarian settlements, - interesting, that the functionless, mixed-character villages show higher rate. This index is the highest in villages with touristic function.

The rate of w o m e n b e t w e e n 15-39 y e a r s is also the lowest in agrarian villages and it indicates again their relative ageing. In the same time the rate of w o m e n w i t h

more than two children and the rate of women between 0-14 years is the highest in settlements with agrarian character, - these refer to the great migration of young women /15-39 years/ from these villages.

The lack of suitable workplaces is the greatest problem in functionless settlements, which is indicated by low activity level, the relative high rate of educated women /with at least elementary school graduation/ the relatively low number of children and the higher rate of women between the age of 15-39.

The lower level of education compared to that of villages with industrial character, the relative low level of those working in the tertiary sector, and the relatively low activity of women-indicates for the villages with central function, that these are not able fulfil their functions and the development of institutional network is needed to accomplish their required tasks.

After this let us see the main territorial differences. The highest rate of women activity level can be found in counties: Pest, Bács-Kiskun and Zala. These three counties are the representatives of three different territorial types.

In Pest county while the rate of women employed in industry is the highest, the educational level is low. /The rate of those, who has finished elementary school is lower, than the country average./ Though the rate of women between the ages of 15-39 is the highest here, the number of children is rather low. The fact, that the rate of women migrating from underdeveloped areas is very high can be the main reason of these above mentioned peculiarities.

Examining the rate of employment in industry its progress is at the same rate as the rate of active women. The number of workers in tertiary branches shows slower growth, while, there is a drastic decrease in the number of agrarian earners. Together with the further

increase in employment level, the rate of industrial workers will show strong decrease, while slow growth will be recognised in the other two sectors /agriculture and tertiary/. All these tendencies will base on the following:

- favourable industrial working opportunities,
- commuting possibilities to Budapest and to the other industrial towns of the country, and at last
- the increasing rate of agrarian earners.

K o m á r o m c o u n t y is similar to Pest county in the relative high activity level and strong industrial character. So, the rate of women working in industry is also high in Komárom county and similarly to Pest county, the rate of women working in tertiary also shows rather high numbers. When examining all the counties, one can get the surprising result, that only in these two counties is a parallel increase in activity level, and in rate of women working in tertiary, though this is a factor, which indicates the relative development of a territory But in Komárom county - in contrast with Pest county - the rate of women finishing the elementary school is high, the highest in Hungary. This shows that the immigrants did not come from the underdeveloped eastern parts of the country, but from the more developed Transdanubian territories. In Komárom county, the rate of women employment shows significant increase especially since 1960, because the profitability of coal-mining became questionable at that time - several coal mines had been winded up - and new branches of industry /also suitable for women/ - had been found.

Bács-Kiskun county is located in the southern part of the Great Plain. The characteristics of this territory are, the scattered farmsteads and the rather favourable conditions for household farming. Considering women employment, this county shows the second highest rate in agriculture and the lowest in industry among the counties of Hungary. This refers to relative underdevelopment and the low level in service-supply. The rate of women finishing elementary school is the lowest among the counties; and the rate of elderly women is rather high.

From the point of our research the rate of employment has importance, so we have to investigate the rootes of its high rate. Its main cause can be found in the dominant role of household farming and of special cooperatives /these are organized on lower level than cooperatives, the organizational connections are not so tight than in cooperatives, so it shows more similar features with household farming/. The agrarian activity is specialised on vegetable, fruit, grape production and animal breeding as conforming the natural cirsumstances. This kind of production is on a low level of mechanization and in great need of physical work - all these led to the formation of special cooperatives.

Z a l a c o u n t y has a typical settlement structure with settlements under 500 inhabitants. This county shows great similarities with Bács-Kiskun county, in respects of the examined factors - agrarian earners, employment rate of women in industry and tertiary sector, rate of women with the lowest level of education, rate of women between 55-X years all these, in respect of the growth in employment level - though the settlement structures are totally different.

In those villages, where the employment level of women is below 20%, the rate of industrial and agrarian workers, and the rate of those, finishing the elementary school is 36% alike. /The rate of those, employed in tertiary sector is 28%./ Already at the 30% rate of employment, the ratio of agrarian earners increases to 60% and this number, in case of industrial workers falls to 20%.

Parallel with the increase in activity level, the rate of women finishing elementary school is decreasing. In the villages, where the highest activity level exists, /the rate of active women is between 60-70%/ the rate of graduated women is at the minimum. At the same time the rate of agrarian earners is about 80%, but the rate of those, in industry is 10% and in the tertiary sector it is only 5%. The proportion of elderly women is also high, and all these ratios sign the relative underdevelopment of these villages. The significant role of agriculture in the activity - at the same time - points to the importance of household farming activity.

The lowest activity level can revealed in counties Hajdu-Bihar, Szabolcs-Szatmár and Borsod-Abauj-Zemplén. The first two are situated in the North-Eastern part of the Great Plain and there is a similarity in natural circumstances and in settlement structure as well. In both counties agriculture plays decisive role in employment and the role of industry and tertiary sector is of no importance. The rate of women finishing elementary school is the lowest among the counties, but the population structure is favourable. Especially in Szabolcs-Szatmár county the portion of women with more than two children is very high. All these characteristics come from the high ratio of gipsy population. The causes of low activity level are, beside the insignificant role of industry and the tertiary sector, the characteristics of agrarian activity. According to natural endowments the agricultural production is specialized, has a rather high level of mechanization, so that the need of physical work is lower. The role of household farming is less dominant than in Bács-Kiskun county and its first task is to ensure family feeding.

Similarly to Zala county, the villages under 500 inhabitants characterize the settlement structure of Borsod-Abauj-Zemplén, but with different features. The natural endowment here are rather unfavourable, mainly because of the great portion of hilly regions but one can find here the second greatest heavy-industry center of Hungary.

Heavy industry does not ensure good opportunities for women employment, but attracts the industrial branches, where women might be employed - this is why the rate of women employment is 30% in industry. The rate of women, working in industry is the highest in case of villages with 50% activity rate - can be found especially around towns and industrial centers. Because the rate of women, working in the tertiary sector is very low, it can be supposed that the great number of active women in industry does not mean that the number of industrial workplaces is also high in these Villages. /As the location of industry in villages generally attracts service industry./ The highest rate of activity can be found in villages under

500 inhabitants and with agrarian character, where more than 90% of active women in agriculture causes the high /60-70%/ activity level. There is a close correlation between employment in industry and educational level, this can be seen from the fact, that the highest rate of industrial activity - in most cases appears together with the highest educational level. The age-structure is rather unfavourable in villages with agrarian character, which comes from the migration of younger population. Besides the absence in suitable workplaces, the followings play role in low women activity level here:

- Men mostly work in three shifts and do hard physical work, so that they cannot participate in housework,
- great part of men are employed in coal-mining, where the salaries are very high so that women are not so forced to undertake jobs,
- for these families, where the husband is employed in coal-mining, household farming is characteristic.

Our research proved the hypothesis, that the most important obstacles of involving women living in villages into employment beside agriculture are as follows:

- the very low level of education and specialization,
- the lack of suitable working opportunities in industry or in tertiary sector,
- the number of children, which is higher, than in towns.

There has been revealed, that in some case of villages the location of services depends on the existence of industry and not on the number of inhabitants. On the one hand this is proved by the lack of women, employed in the tertiary sector in case of agrarian villages with great number of inhabitants and on the other hand that even in villages with central function the rate of women working in service industry is only a bit higher than that of employed in industry.

Our results call on attention to the probable difficulties of involving both dependent and agrarian employed women into industrial or tertiary activity because of low qualification and education it is probable, that this kind of activity will not have higher social benefit than the activity done in household farms or generally in agriculture. In the same time, not only the social but the individual benefit as well might be questioned under such circumstances. The exeptions are formated from the female inhabitants of those villages, where the unfavourable natural conditions do not ensure the high level of agricultural production, which are situated close to towns or industrial centers and transportation facilities are advantageous.

The above-mentioned are, of course, only suppositions in the present stage of the examinations. Deeper revealing the problem and drawing final conclusions call for further exhaustive examinations and analyses.

Enclosure

Making use of the data obtained from the population census in 1970, we have elaborated the following types of villages:

Townships With Central Field Of Activity. As such can be classified villages having secondary or higher central function, according to the Conception of Hungarian Settlement Network Development.

Townships With Foreign Tourism Character are those designated as such by the Conception of Hungarian Settlement Network Development.

Villages With Industrial Character can be named those villages in which more than 50% of the active earners living there work in the industry or in the building industry.

Villages With Agricultural Character are those villages in which more than 50% of the active earners living there work in the agriculture. There are two subtypes of them:

- more than 50% of the active wage-earners living in the settlement work in the agriculture, and the proportion of engaged persons in industry, building industry or other branches of economy does not reach 20% in either case. These are the so-called "pure agricultural villages";
- if the proportion of the engaged in agriculture is as much as 50%, or the proportion of workers in industry, building industry or in other not agricultural branches reaches 20% collectively or severally, "agricultural villages with mixed line" are concerned.

Villages With Mixed Economic Character are qualified villages which can be ranged with none of the above categories.